

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02 STR-04 TRSE-00
LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 EURE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 /050 W
-----091754Z 112388 /50

O R 091604Z FEB 77
FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2969
INFO ALL EC CAPS 3097
AMEMBASSY LISBON
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EEC, PO, ECIN, PFOR
SUBJECT: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, FEBRUARY 8, 1977:
DISCUSSIONS ON PORTUGAL

1. SUMMARY: DURING THEIR FEBRUARY 8 COUNCIL MEETING, THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS REACHED AGREEMENT ON THE "ELEMENTS" OF THE COMMON ATTITUDE TO BE ASSUMED BY THE MEMBER STATES ON THE ISSUE OF PORTUGUESE ACCESSION TO THE EC DURING PRIME MINISTER SOARES' UPCOMING TOUR OF THE NINE CAPITALS. THE AGREED POSITION REFLECTS A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THOSE WHO WANTED A MORE FORTHCOMING RESPONSE TO SOARES AND THOSE WHO PREFERRED A MORE NON-COMMITTAL REPLY. IN A MOVE DESCRIBED BY FRG SOURCES AS A MESSAGE AS MUCH FOR GREECE AND SPAIN AS FOR PORTUGAL, THE MINISTERS AGREED THAT "POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS", I.E., THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY, WOULD BEAR UPON THE EC ATTITUDE TOWARD ACCESSION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SPOKESMAN FOR UK FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND (THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT) ANNOUNCED THAT THE MINISTERS, AFTER "A LONG AND BY NO MEANS ACRIMONIOUS" DISCUSSION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAD AGREED ON THE FOLLOWING "ELEMENTS" OF A COMMON ATTITUDE TO BE ASSUMED BY THE EC MEMBER STATES TOWARDS PORTUGUESE ACCESSION TO THE COMMUNITY DURING SOARES' UPCOMING TOUR OF THE EC CAPITALS, SCHEDULED TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 14 IN LONDON.
-- THE MEMBER STATES WOULD DRAW ATTENTION TO THE FUNDAMENTALLY OPEN NATURE OF THE COMMUNITY, AS SPELLED

OUT IN THE TREATIES, AND TO PORTUGAL'S FUTURE IN EUROPE.

-- THEY WOULD WELCOME THE POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO EUROPE OF NOW-DEMOCRATIC PORTUGAL.

-- THEY WOULD EXPRESS CONCERN OVER PROBLEMS WHICH ECONOMIC INTEGRATION WOULD ENTAIL IN THE SHORT TERM IN VIEW OF THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL, SOCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL CIRCUMSTANCES PREVAILING IN PORTUGAL.

-- THEY WOULD REAFFIRM THEIR DESIRE TO CONTINUE THE COMMON SEARCH WITH PORTUGAL FOR WAYS AND MEANS OF ALIGNING THEIR ECONOMIES, WITH THE AIM OF LEADING ULTIMATELY TO THE FULL AND COMPLETE ACCESSION OF PORTUGAL TO THE COMMUNITY.

-- THEY WOULD TAKE NOTE OF THE GOP'S INTENTION TO SUBMIT A REQUEST FOR ACCESSION ON THE BASIS OF ARTICLE 237 OF THE ROME TREATY. (COMMENT: ARTICLE 237 SPECIFIES: "ANY EUROPEAN STATE MAY APPLY TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY. IT SHALL ADDRESS ITS APPLICATION TO THE COUNCIL, WHICH SHALL ACT UNANIMOUSLY AFTER OBTAINING THE OPINION OF THE COMMISSION." END COMMENT.)

-- THEY WOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THE PROCEDURES PROVIDED FOR IN THE TREATIES REQUIRE, BEFORE THE OPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS, THE SEARCH FOR AND THE DEFINING OF SATISFACTORY SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS STANDING IN THE WAY OF PORTUGAL'S ECONOMIC INTEGRATION INTO THE COMMUNITY.

3. ACCORDING TO A BELGIAN PERMDEL SOURCE, THE MINISTERS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALSO AGREED THAT THE PROCESS OF DEFINING "SATISFACTORY SOLUTIONS" SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, AS WELL. THIS SOURCE SAID THAT THE MINISTERS AGREED THAT THERE WAS AN ADDED DIMENSION TO THE CURRENT ROUND OF COMMUNITY ENLARGEMENT THAT HAD BEEN ABSENT IN THE EARLIER ROUND: THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ADVERSE TURN ON THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL FRONTS OF POTENTIAL MEMBER STATES. THUS, THE MINISTERS, IN EFFECT, AGREED ON THE NECESSITY OF ENSURING THAT PORTUGAL REMAINS DEMOCRATIC EVEN AFTER A REQUEST FOR ACCESSION IS MADE. FRG PERMDEL SOURCES COMMENTED THAT THIS PARTICULAR POINT IS INTENDED AS A SIGNAL TO GREECE AND SPAIN AS WELL.

4. OUR BELGIAN SOURCE SAID THAT THE COMMON LINE AGREED UPON FOR THE SOARES VISIT MET THE CONCERNS OF THE FRENCH (WHO WERE IN THE FOREFRONT OF OPPOSITION TO A FORTHCOMING EC STANCE ALONG WITH THE BENELUX AND ITALY), BY INDICATING RATHER CLEARLY THAT ACCESSION WOULD BE A LENGTHY PROCESS. BY STRESSING ARTICLE 237, AS WELL AS

THE NEED FOR A DETAILED STUDY OF POTENTIAL PROBLEMS BEFORE THE ACTUAL BEGINNING OF NEGOTIATIONS, THE EC HAS PUT THE GOP ON NOTICE THAT IT INTENDS TO PROCEED WITH "NOTHING MORE THAN DELIBERATE SPEED." THIS SOURCE CONFIRMED THAT THE EC HAS SCRAPPED ANY IDEAS OF HALF-WAY MEASURES FOR PORTUGAL, INVOLVING AN OFFER BY THE EC OF LESS THAN FULL MEMBERSHIP. HE ADDED THAT THE MINISTERS ARE TO TAKE UP THE ISSUE OF ENLARGEMENT DURING THEIR MAY 21-22 RETREAT AT LEEDS CASTLE. HINTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEMBERSHIP, MEETINGS, ECONOMIC INTEGRATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ECBRU01261
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770046-0729
Format: TEL
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770260/aaaacamv.tel
Line Count: 125
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 299cacc9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3371664
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, FEBRUARY 8, 1977: DISCUSSIONS ON PORTUGAL
TAGS: ECIN, PFOR, PORG, PO, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/299cacc9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009